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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JEDDAH 000407

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KISL](#) [KPAL](#) [WBG](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: OIC SYG CALLS MEETING WITH SECRETARY "HISTORIC"--
EAGERLY AWAITS ANNOUNCEMENT OF SPECIAL ENVOY

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Classified By: Consul General Martin R. Quinn for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Returning from a recent trip to the U.S. with Organization for the Islamic Conference (OIC) Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, OIC senior official Ufuk Gokcen discussed the highlights of the visit, including the long anticipated meeting between SYG and Secretary Clinton. According to Gokcen, SYG Ihsanoglu called the meeting "historic" and was pleased to hear of the impending appointment of a Special Envoy to the OIC. Gokcen provided brief update of issues the OIC hopes to tackle with the new U.S. Special Envoy in its ongoing efforts to raise its visibility and status on the international stage. END SUMMARY.

REQUESTED ENVOY IMMINENT

[1](#)2. (C) In October 10 meeting with PolOff, OIC senior official Ufuk Gokcen discussed OIC Secretary General Ihsanoglu's September visit to the U.S. which included engagements with high level U.S. officials and prominent U.S. institutions. On the margins of UNGA, Ihsanoglu hosted a reception in honor of the OIC's 40th anniversary, which Ambassadors Rice and Bremmer both attended. SYG's Washington itinerary included visits to Brookings Institute, East West Institute, Georgetown University, Rumi Forum, and the Washington Institute of Peace. He delivered several speeches on improving U.S.-Islamic relations and POTUS' outreach to the Muslim World.

[1](#)3. (C) However, the highlight of SYG's trip, according to Gokcen, was his long-awaited meeting with Secretary Clinton, in which a number of issues were raised and discussed, perhaps none more important, from the OIC's perspective, than the appointment of a Special Envoy to the OIC. Gokcen noted that SYG was excited to learn of the imminent announcement of an envoy and was pleased that the USG took the OIC's advice of ensuring that the appointee be a Muslim with ties to the President.

ERADICATING POLIO

¶4. (C) Regarding ongoing efforts to eradicate polio, Gokcen said that the OIC is working well with the WHO to develop national campaigns to combat the disease and that it is focusing most of its efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan at present. He noted that Dr. Razley Bin Nordin, Director General of the Department of Science and Technology at the OIC, was in Islamabad helping to develop President Zardari's recently announced national campaign to eradicate polio. Gokcen also pointed to the Islamic Fiqh Academy's fatwa urging the ministries of health in Muslim countries to promote campaigns for vaccination against the disease while calling on parents to have their children vaccinated.

¶5. (C) Gokcen stated that regarding the vaccination issue it is imperative that the new envoy promote the OIC's partnership with the U.S. since doing so will attract more philanthropists in the Muslim world to take up the cause.

MATERNAL/INFANT HEALTH: OIC AWAITS USG INPUT

¶6. (C) Noting that Secretary Clinton stressed a strong personal interest in the Maternal and Child Health program during their September meeting, Gokcen said the OIC would be working to build upon the cooperation framework signed between DOS/AID and the OIC last year, adding that Dr. Razley Bin Nordin would be able to provide further updates upon his return. He later commented that he worries, with respect to this program, that "the OIC is waiting for suggestions from the U.S. while the U.S. is waiting for suggestions from the OIC." Hoping to inspire movement from the OIC side, Gokcen said he plans to advise SYG to hire a special consultant to work on this issue specifically.

OIC PLANS DC SYMPOSIUM ON US-ISLAMIC RELATIONS

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¶7. (C) Gokcen said the OIC has been hoping for some time to organize a joint event with a major U.S. institution or university, preferably the Washington Institute of Peace or Georgetown University. He suggested a theme related to POTUS' June 4 Cairo speech but said the organization was completely open to ideas from the U.S. While the OIC would welcome the participation of academics, Gokcen said it would prefer the forum to be driven by high level political officials.

¶8. (C) COMMENT: The OIC continues its quest to raise its visibility and status on the international stage by partnering with the U.S. The appointment of a special envoy will demonstrate that the USG takes the organization seriously, and will provide greater opportunities for advocacy on issues of interest to the USG.
END COMMENT.

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